

## What Does Nature Say?

Taqleed is not something that has been imposed on people from outside. Rather it is something in the human being's nature. And remember if something is part of a man's system, it cannot be taught from outside. It keeps simmering inside and then surfaces in all the people irrespective of nationality or gender all over the world. The result is that descendants of Adam have no choice but respond to this call of nature. As an example;

The urge to know the truth; love for beauty; desire to excel; quest for knowledge; wish for honor and respect; feeling for sacrifice and selflessness; and longing for well-being and goodness.

Every one of these conditions swells up from the depths of heart; and it is only due to these states coming to the surface that people choose another man as an ideal and nations choose heroes.

By the same token nature truly longs for taqleed. Benefiting from research by the experts is a natural phenomenon. If nations give up taqleed; i.e., move away from excellence; let expertise go astray; pay no attention to skills; can you expect that their civilization will prosper; that their social life will bloom; that inventions will multiply; that industry will grow; that trade will thrive?

Certainly not!

The hustle and bustle, the pomp and glory, and the abundance we are used to, it is all because of taqleed. If taqleed loses its effect, everything will stop, all activities will come to a halt.

We all agree that everyone wants to portray himself as an accomplished person. The only way it can be done is to overcome one's weaknesses by benefiting from another individual who has achieved excellence in that particular field.

And it is not a secret that religion is the most important part of our culture because it is directly linked to the affairs of hereafter. Therefore, it is imperative that in order to know and follow the rules and regulations of sharia, we illuminate our minds with the sayings of those great fuqaha who have devoted their lives for teaching the religion.

Ijtihad is the effort Ulama put in and taqleed is the act of benefiting from this effort by general public.

In this context the teacher of the Ulama, Akhund Mulla Muhammad Kazim Khorasani (died 1329 H) has a beautiful saying:

ثم انه لا يذهب عليك ان جواز التقليد ورجوع الجاهل إلى الجملة في العالم يكون بديهيا جبليا فطريا لا يحتاج إلى دليل.

“We should not forget that taqleed is an undisputed fact and it is quite obvious that someone who does not know certain issues will ask a knowledgeable person. It is a natural phenomenon and is in need of no arguments.”<sup>1</sup>

To summarize, taqleed in reality is a dignified way for a person to achieve perfection. If a man could not acquire the knowledge he needs to solve his problems, he should benefit from others’ experiences.

Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) says:

لَا يقبل اللَّهُ عَمَلاً إِلَّا بِمَعْرِفَةٍ.

“Allah (SWT) will not accept deeds that were performed without comprehension.”<sup>2</sup>

We follow a Mujtahid because he has the insight and the wisdom; he has the cures for our ills.

## A Little Explanation

If anyone wants to write commentaries on ‘Ilm al-Usul (Knowledge of Principles) and Jurisprudence, they need to follow established academic rules and regulations. However, some individuals have not followed these rules and have written some articles that have been unduly harsh in their criticism on some topics

Let us take the example of taqleed. They looked up the meaning of taqleed in a dictionary and decided that taqleed is putting a leash around your neck. They simply ignored where the word comes from and what do the experts have to say. They have tried to misguide general public that taqleed is a burden that has been placed on their shoulders in the sacred name of sharia and they just have to live with it. However, the concept of taqleed is just the opposite.

What it really means is that the follower (muqallid) places the burden of the accuracy of the fatwa squarely on the shoulders of the marja’ at-taqleed, while absolving himself of the responsibility for the goodness of his deeds related to the fatwa; whereas the marja’ is held responsible for those deeds. The rule in the philosophy of law books states:

العامي يجعل قلادة اعماله على عنق من يقلده.

“A commoner hangs the register of his deeds around the neck of the marja’ at-taqleed.”

In this context our greatest narrator of traditions, Muhammad Bin Yaqub Kaleni, writes: Once Imam As-Sadiq (as) was present at a meeting at Rabia<sup>3</sup> Tur Rai’s house. A Bedouin asked Rabia a question. Rabia immediately responded. The Bedouin immediately asked another question. “OK, do you accept the responsibility for what you have said?” Rabia became quiet. The Bedouin repeated his question. Rabia still stayed quiet. At this juncture Imam Ja’far As-Sadiq (as) explained the relevant rule:

”هو في عنقه.“

“Yes the burden is on his neck”. Then the Imam elaborated:

”وكل مفتض صامن.“

“Whoever gives the fatwa, is accountable for it.” <sup>4</sup>

1. Kifayatul Usul, p 472, published in Beirut

2. Usul al-Kafi, vol 1, p 35, published Maktaba Islamia, Tehran

3. Rabia Tur Rai’s father was Abdur Rahman Farokh. According to Rijal Sheikh Tusi he was a favorite pupil of Imam Zainul Abideen (as). He also received blessings from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as). He was one of the well-known fuqahas of Madina. Rijal p 177.

4. Furu Kafi – vol 7, Baab Innal Mufti Zamin – p 409, published Darul Kutub Al Islamia – Tehran

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